



Bellingham Technical College
Press Release

September 27, 2017

Media Contact:

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Communications

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For Immediate Release

BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND THE BELLINGHAM EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM UNION CONTINUE ACTIVE LABOR NEGOTIATIONS – CLASSES CANCELLED FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Bellingham, Washington-September 27, 2017. – Bellingham Technical College (BTC) continues labor negotiations with Bellingham Educational Support Team (BEST), representing 57 classified clerical, technical, instructional and retail support staff at BTC.

BEST will be striking tomorrow, Thursday, September 28.

BTC faculty voted to not cross a staff picket line, therefore all classes are cancelled for Thursday, September 28.

There will be campus services open to students during the strike including:

- College Services building Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (360.752.8600);
- IMPACT! Office 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. this week
- Campus Store with varied hours
- the Assessment Testing Center Tuesday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- STAR and TRIO tutoring; Thursday & Friday 8am to 2pm in Building H, Room H9
- Campus Center library will be open from Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Friday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and closed Saturday. There are staff on hand to help with research, technology, Canvas and more.

We will continue to share updates as they become available via BTC Alerts. You can also get information via our website and the BTC emergency phone line, 360.752.8766.

Press release from earlier today with salary information:



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BELLINGHAM EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS GENERAL SALARY INFORMATION

Bellingham, Washington-September 27, 2017 at 5:45 p.m. – Bellingham Technical College (BTC) continues labor negotiations with Bellingham Educational Support Team (BEST), representing classified clerical, technical, instructional and retail support staff at BTC. Joint bargaining sessions between BTC and BEST began in April 2017.

Today is the third day of the BEST strike. Faculty, represented by the Bellingham Education Association (BEA) voted to not cross a staff picket line, as a result, all classes have been cancelled since Monday, September 25.

It is a priority of Bellingham Technical College to ensure that employees receive equitable compensation packages that are competitive with their peers at other Washington two-year institutions, while at the same time managing resources and resolving an over \$100,000 deficit in the 2017-2018 budget. BTC recently completed a salary comparison of BTC classified salaries with similar positions within community colleges and state agencies. On average, BTC classified salaries are 12.75% above the salaries paid to similar positions.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases are authorized and funded in part by the State of Washington and in part by BTC's local funds. In the four years prior to 2017, employees represented by BEST received COLAs in the amount of 0.0%, 1.5%, 3.0%, and 2.0%. The 2017-19 Washington State Budget provided all BEST employees a COLA salary increase of 2.3 % on July 1, 2017, which has already been applied to BEST salaries, a second COLA salary increase of 2.7% on July 1, 2018 and a third COLA salary increase of 1.0% on January 1, 2019. The parties remain in negotiations on additional salary increases above the COLA.

As of September 1, 2017, there are 57 employees represented by BEST, 27 of which have been hired within the last five years. These 27 employees receive an average annual increment of 5.18% (excluding any state mandated COLA). For example, a Clerical Assistant III hired five years ago at \$30,072 is now making \$41,382 (including COLAs). This is an effective increase after five years of service of 37.61%.

About Bellingham Technical College

Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers two Bachelor of Sciences degrees, seven direct transfer degrees such as pre-engineering, pre-nursing, electronics, mechanical engineering, and technology and business. Completion of these degrees prepares BTC students to transfer with a junior status to participating colleges and universities in Washington State. BTC offers 38 associate degree and 51 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to www.btc.edu.

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